

Tobacco-Free

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Benefits

of going tobacco-free in the workplace

Establishing a tobacco-free policy in the workplace not only supports your employees, it supports your bottom line. Encouraging employees to quit and prohibiting tobacco use during work hours is key to a healthier and more productive workforce.

It is a well-documented fact that permitting tobacco use on the job leads to more sick days, less time spent working, and higher insurance premiums and medical expenses. If your organization provides health insurance to its employees, tobacco cessation coverage is the single most cost-effective benefit you can provide. If health insurance is not provided, there are numerous free services you can utilize as you develop your tobacco-free policy and support employees' efforts in quitting.



Creating a Tobacco-Free Policy

Get Started

1. Create a policy group. Getting input from a diverse group of managers and employees (including those who use tobacco) is crucial to success. If any employees are union members, include union representatives from the very beginning.
2. Create a clearly stated vision, mission, and desired outcomes of the new policy. Create a timeline that goes over the logistical steps towards a tobacco-free policy and the date on which the policy goes into effect.
3. Identify existing resources you can leverage. There are free counseling services that offer nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) for those who qualify, including (call for details):
 - Area Health Education Center (AHEC): (941) 552-1280
 - Quitline: (877) 822-6669
 - Online Quit Coach: www.quitnow.net/florida

Did you know?

A national survey of over 29,000 workers found that tobacco use was a leading cause of workers' lost production time—greater than alcohol abuse or family emergencies. Quitting smoking, or even just cutting back, improves a worker's productivity.¹

Smoking and smoking-related illnesses annually cost employers \$2,132 per smoker in excess medical expenses.²

Sources: 1. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*
2. *US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (adjusted for 2008 dollars)*

Sample Policy: Tobacco-Free Workplace

Below are some ideas you can adapt and incorporate into your new tobacco-free policy.

Employee Support

- Communicate openly about the policy far in advance of its implementation date. Employees need to be kept well informed about changes to company policy, changes to health plan coverage, and the availability of services to help them quit tobacco.
- A well written policy will be clear on consequences for violating the policy. Determine early on who is responsible for enforcement and what that looks like. This process can be reinforced during employee orientations and updates.
- There are several free services for quitting tobacco to which you can refer your employees. The Florida Quitline and AHEC offer free counseling sessions and Nicotine Replacement Therapy. AHEC counselors can even come to your workplace and host sessions on site! Your county health department can also stock you with free educational materials that encourage quitting.
- An optimal policy would provide at least two sessions of treatment, both counseling and NRT, per year. For many ex-tobacco users, it takes more than one attempt to successfully quit.

Health Insurance

- Find out if tobacco cessation services are covered by your insurance provider. We can assist you in asking the right questions to find out the details of your policy.
- The most effective tobacco cessation benefits cover all of the following:
 - FDA-approved Nicotine Replacement Therapy** (NRT), including both prescription and over-the-counter.
 - Counseling services**, including telephone, individual and/or group counseling.
- Eliminate or reduce co-pay for tobacco cessation treatment to encourage employee participation.
- Incentivize employees by offering an insurance premium reimbursement for non-smokers and potentially for those who participate in a tobacco cessation course that year.

Changes to the Workplace Environment

- Post signage indicating that the campus is tobacco-free.
- Hand out palm cards for clients that describe the new policy.
- Eliminate ashtrays.